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Every Day Manual for the Christian Household

Our Father's Love Comforter

By the late

Rev. James Smith

OUR FATHER AND COMFORTER.

Every-Day Manuals
For the Christian Household.

OUR FATHER AND COMFORTER;

OR,

God the Portion of His People.

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REV. JAMES SMITH,
Cheltenham.

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OUR FATHER.

"I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—2 Cor. vi. 18.

TRIED Christian, thou art not an orphan! Thou hast a Father. God, in all the glory of his nature and perfections, is thy Father. He has adopted thee for his own. He has regenerated thee by his Spirit. He has called thee out of the world, and has promised to do a father's part by thee. He says, "*I will be a Father unto you.*" Do you want advice? Consult your Father. Do you need supplies? Ask them of your Father. Are you tormented with cares? Cast them on your Father. Are you alarmed at foes? Cry unto your Father. Do your difficulties appear insurmountable? Appeal to your Father. God is not merely a Father in name; he has a Father's nature. He not only calls us his sons and daughters, but wishes us to act towards him as such. We should exercise confidence in his love; we should trust in his word; we should

appeal to his paternal heart; we should look for our supplies from his hand. In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we should let our requests be made known unto God. He loves to see us confide in his care, rely on his word, expect his communications, and acquiesce in his will. Believer, whatever trials may befall thee, whatever troubles may come upon thee, whatever enemies may rise up against thee, whatever changes may take place in thy circumstances, one thing can never befall thee—thou canst never be fatherless; therefore thou canst never be friendless. Thou art God's child, however poor thy circumstances or trying thy path. What an unspeakable mercy!

"We are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ."—ROM. viii. 16, 17.

OUR ELDER BROTHER.

"Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother."—MATT. xii. 50.

EVERY relation in which Jesus stands to his people is precious. But there are some peculiarly so, especially under certain peculiar circumstances. He is not only our Saviour, but our brother. He is bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh. Possessing our nature, being part of the same family, he watches over us with a brother's eye, and loves us with a brother's love. He is the "brother born for adversity." He takes the deepest interest in all our affairs, and watches over us to do us good. We may go to him in all our troubles, and open our hearts to him without the least reserve. We cannot go to one who loves us more, or one who is more able or willing to help us. He laid down his life for us, thereby proving the intensity of his love to us. He is gone into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God *for us*. My

tried Christian friend, the eye of Jesus is upon thee in thy trial; the ear of Jesus is open, to listen to thy cries; the heart of Jesus is affected with thy griefs and woes; and the tongue of Jesus is employed to intercede with his Father for thee. Sweet thought! we have a brother in heaven! a brother who knows all we suffer, and who will frustrate the designs of our foes, sanctify to us our troubles and trials, and eventually make all things work together for our good! His strong arm will defend us, his merciful hand will supply us, and his tender heart will ever sympathize with us. He will guide us through life and death by his counsel, and afterwards receive us to glory. Let us, therefore, go to him in every trouble, plead with him to supply our wants, trust him in every dark and dreary hour, and expect him to show a brother's love.

"Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [family]: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."—HEB. ii. 11.

THE COMFORTER.

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."—JOHN xiv. 16.

THE sorrows of the Lord's people are sometimes so deep, that human comforters are vain. They do but aggravate our woe and increase our distress. Jesus knew this; and therefore, having comforted his disciples himself by the space of three years, and being now about to leave them, he promises to send the Holy Spirit, to be the abiding Comforter of his people. The Holy Spirit is a divine person. He can search the heart, pierce the clouds, penetrate all recesses, and ascertain the true cause of all our sorrows. His tenderness and love are infinite, therefore he can administer consolation in the most suitable and efficient manner. The whole fulness of Jesus is open to him, and he will select and apply the most appropriate remedy in every case of sorrow. He applies the promises; he unveils our Father's loving countenance; he

reveals the suitability and sufficiency of Jesus; he witnesses to our adoption, and cries "Abba, Father," in our hearts. To him we are indebted for every bright ray, every cheering hope, every pleasant prospect, and every refreshing consolation. It is his *work* to comfort; it is his *delight* to comfort. Let us therefore look to him for comfort under all our trials, troubles, temptations, and distresses. Our earthly friends may fail us, or prove miserable comforters to us; but the holy and ever blessed Spirit can and will comfort us to the end. Blessed Jesus, send the Comforter into my heart, to comfort me with the assurances of thy love and the joys of thy salvation! O to realize the presence and power of the Comforter in my soul, unfolding truth, revealing Jesus, and sealing me unto the day of redemption!

"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."—JOHN xvi. 14.

THE APPOINTMENT.

"No man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."—1 THESS. iii. 3.

ALTHOUGH affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. Trouble is the natural consequence of sin, and all trouble springs from this bitter root. But God makes our trouble our medicine, and uses it for our present and everlasting welfare. Our troubles are not the inflictions of an angry God, but the chastisements of a loving Father. He foresaw what we should be, and what would be necessary for us, and consequently appointed the number, nature, and length of our troubles. He sometimes sends trials directly from himself: then we see his hand, and find it comparatively easy to submit to his will. But at other times he allows us to involve ourselves in trouble: then we cannot trace his hand, and therefore yield to temptation, depression, and

grief. But every Christian has his cup: it is mixed by his Father's wisdom, and put into his hand by his Father's providence; he should therefore take it, endeavour to acquiesce in it, and say with Jesus, "The cup that my heavenly Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" Every trouble comes from God's appointment, is intended to do us good, and will be overruled for our real welfare. Every trial is labelled "LOVE," if we could but read the writing; and in every affliction God calls to us, saying, "Come near unto me, my son, that I may bless thee." Let us, then, draw near unto God, and show before him our trouble. Let us entreat him to sanctify it to us, that it may wean us from earth, consecrate us to Jesus, and meeten us for heaven. All is love that comes from the God of love.

"He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him."—JOB xxiii. 13, 14.

THE LIMIT.

"Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."—1 PETER i. 6.

TEMPTATIONS are trials, and are intended to test our principles, try our profession, and prove the strength of our graces. The temptations or trials of the believer are manifold. They come from various quarters, they affect us in various ways; but they are all limited. They are but for a season. "In the *day* of adversity consider;" "The *hour* of temptation;" "Our light affliction, which is but for *a moment;*" "For a *small moment* have I forsaken thee." Thus they are limited sometimes to "a day," "an hour," "a moment," "a small moment." God fixes the limit of every trial; and however long that limit may be, it is confined to the present time. "I reckon that the sufferings of *this present time* are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Beloved, however severe the trial, it cannot be

long; however heavy the burden, you have not far to carry it. We shall soon lay down our cross, and ascend to receive our crown. If our Father frown upon us now, he will smile again soon. "His anger endureth *but for a moment;* in his favour is life: weeping may endure *for a night*, but joy cometh in the morning." Thy present trouble is *but for a season*, and that season will soon close; therefore bear it patiently, prayerfully, and hopefully. Yield not to despondency, listen not to Satan; but hope in God, for you shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance. The darkness of night will soon be chased away by the rosy light of morning; the limit of thy trouble will soon be reached; and then joy, everlasting joy, will be upon thy head, and all sorrow and sighing will flee away for ever.

"Now the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *after that ye have suffered a while*, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."—1 PETER v. 10.

THE LEGACY.

" Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."—JOHN xiv. 27.

JESUS knows from experience what his people need. His life on earth was a life of trial, trouble, and grief. He was the " Man of Sorrows." Yet, in the midst of all, he enjoyed peace. His spirit was generally at rest. His faith was in lively exercise, and his repose on his Father's love was perfect. When all was confusion and strife without, he had peace within. And when he departed out of this world to go unto his Father, he left us this as a legacy—" Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Our souls may be peaceful, let our outward circumstances be what they may. By the exercise of faith in Jesus, by staying the mind on Jesus, and by acquiescing in the will of Jesus, we shall have peace. So it is written: " Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." My soul,

I charge thee to cast every care on Jesus. Submit to his will, nay, *prefer* his will to thine own. Let the word of Jesus be thy rule and comfort, let the glory of Jesus be thy aim and object, and let the legacy of Jesus be taken to the throne of grace, that it may be paid thee by his heavenly Father. Pray, pray for holy tranquillity of mind, amidst all the storms of time, and expect an inward calm of spirit both in life and death. Believe, and the legacy is thine. Pray in faith, and the legacy will be paid thee. Thy Saviour, who left thee this legacy on earth, lives in heaven to see it paid to all applicants. Therefore, present it in confidence, expect to receive it, and you shall soon enjoy it. We that believe do enter into rest.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—PHIL. iv. 6, 7.

THE SOLACE.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."—Ps. xlvi. 1.

GOD is whatever his people need; and whatever he is, he is to them. Are they in danger? He is their refuge. Here they are safe from the avenger of blood, the justice of God, and the threatenings of a violated law. Are they weak? He is their strength. He will strengthen them for conflict with the foe, strengthen them while in the engagement, and bring them off more than conquerors. Are they in trouble? He is a help, a very present help in trouble. He will help them to bear trouble; he will help them to improve trouble; he will help them out of trouble. He will deliver them in six troubles, and in seven shall no evil touch them. Christian, in every danger run to thy God. His arms are open to receive thee; his heart is a refuge for thee. He will screen thee; he will shelter thee; he will defend thee. He will be

thy protection in adversity and prosperity, in life and death. In all thy weakness, go to him for strength; in all thy infirmities, repair to him for grace. He is the strength of the poor, and the strength of the needy in his distress. He has strengthened thousands of poor feeble ones, and he will strengthen thee. In all thy troubles go to him for solace and succour. He will help thee. Hear his own precious words, addressed to his people when in deep trouble and distress: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." He is thy shield in danger, and thy very present help in trouble. He is always at hand, always ready to help, always willing to bless thee.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—HEB. iv. 16.

THE COMMON LOT.

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."—Ps. xxxiv. 19.

THE Lord's people are all righteous. *To* them the glorious righteousness of Jesus is imputed. *In* them the righteous work of the Holy Spirit is wrought. *By* them the righteous precepts of God's Word are observed. The obedience of Jesus is their title to heaven. The work of the Holy Spirit prepares them for glory. Their practical conformity to the moral requirements of the gospel, proves them to be justified before God, and sanctified by his grace. All the righteous are afflicted: some more, some less; but none are exempt. Nor have they merely one source of affliction; for "*many* are the afflictions of the righteous." There has been more than one Job, or one Lazarus, in God's family; though all suffer not so severely as they did. Every son is scourged. But however numerous, however great their afflictions may be, they are

more than a match for them. As their day, so is their strength; and they ever find that the grace of Jesus is sufficient for them. "The Lord delivereth him out of them all." God has undertaken to sustain us in, to bring us through, and deliver us out of, all our troubles. God's deliverances are always perfect. He delivers every one of his children; and he delivers every one completely and for ever. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." No believer ever perished in his affliction. No Christian ever found his burden greater than his strength. We have often doubted, often feared, often questioned our safety; but we, even we, can testify that God is faithful, that his promise is true, and therefore we have persevered until now.

"Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth."—Ps. lxxi. 20.

THE FOOTPRINTS.

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—REV. vii. 14.

NOTHING is more common than for the Lord's people to be tempted to think that their troubles and trials are peculiar. But a careful perusal of God's Word, and communion with the Lord's people, will soon convince them that this is a mistake. All the Lord's family have gone home to heaven by the same road, and have all experienced more or less the same trials. All have to experience a conflict within, and a rough road without. Look at the prophets; theirs was a most trying path. Hence says the apostle, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." Just so the Corinthians. They fancied that their trials were singular, therefore Paul wrote them: "There hath no temptation

taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Just so the Master also: "He was in all points tempted like as we are;" and "in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted.' Tried Christian, thou art in the footsteps of the flock; look attentively at thy road, and thou wilt discern the footprints of the great Shepherd, and also of his little flock. It is of the path of trial that Jesus says, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Cheer up, then, for present troubles lead to future glory. The weary way will sweeten the rest at the end. The horrors of the wilderness will make Canaan appear more lovely and pleasant. Press on, for home is just before you.

"Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."—1 PETER v. 9.

RELATIONSHIP PROVED.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."—HEB. xii. 7, 8.

AFFLICTIONS are often chastisements. They flow from a Father's love, and are intended to correct us for our faults. Consequently when brought into trouble, we should ask, "Is there not a cause?" and say with the prophet, "Let us search, and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." All the Lord's children need correction, and all are corrected. If allowed to sin without stripes, or to become conformed to the world without chastisement, our sonship is at best very questionable. But when our consciences are made and kept tender, when our follies are followed with trials, troubles, or painful convictions, our sonship is proved. God will not allow his children to wander from him far, or to wander from him long. "The rod

and reproof give wisdom;" and we shall be smitten and reproved often if we go astray from the right ways of the Lord. If I cannot sin without remorse, if I cannot rest until I confess it to the Lord, if I cannot be happy until I receive a renewed sense of his pardoning love, there can be no reasonable doubt of my relationship. God is my Father; and however fickle, feeble, wayward, and unworthy, I am his child. He uses the rod of a father, that he may not use the sword of a judge. I will therefore arise, and go to my Father. I will plead with him for grace, that I may approve the discipline, kiss the rod, and bless the hand that strikes me. O my Father, let thy child lay his aching head on thy bosom; soothe me with one of thy sweet words, assure me of thy love, and enable me lovingly to accept of thy correction! O Lord, correct me; but in mercy, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."—REV. iii. 19.

THE GRACIOUS DIRECTION.

'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."—Ps. lv. 22.

TROUBLES in the flesh are often heavy burdens to the spirit. Nor have we a friend, a relative, or foe, but sometime or other lays a burden upon us. We cannot always prevent burdens being laid upon us, but we may refuse to carry them. Indeed, we ought not to carry any burdens; for it is not becoming in the King's children to act like porters. We have a great Burden-bearer—one who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows—one who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Now he bore our sins—the guilt and the punishment of them—that we may never bear them. He sighed, that we may sing. He sunk under the weight of our sorrows, that we may rise and taste his sweetest joys. And now, when he sees us burdened with care, grief, anxiety, or worldly trouble, he sweetly says,—"Let me take thy burden and carry it for thee.

My strength is greater than thine. Bring it to me. Cast it on me. Leave it with me." O Christian, what a Saviour thou hast! He so cares for thee, that he desires thee not to care; and he so loves to see thee happy, that he proposes, yea, asks, to be allowed to carry thy burden for thee. More than this, he will not only carry thy burden, but he will carry thee. He will place his everlasting arms beneath thee, lift thee up out of every difficulty, and set thee before his face for ever. Take thy present burden to Jesus, and let him bear it for thee. If you do not, you will find it too much for your patience, and you will soon begin to think that the Lord deals hardly with you. But if you take it to Jesus, he will not only bear it for you, but endear himself to you by doing so.

"Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—Ps. l. 15.

THE GROANING.

"We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened."
2 Cor. v. 4.

THE body is a poor residence for the soul. It was at first a noble structure; but it is now like a poor canvas tent, affording few accommodations, and letting in all kinds of annoyances. It is the seat of pain, the medium of temptation, and often a great hindrance to us in our spiritual course. We groan in this tent, because of what we feel we want, as well as from what we positively suffer. Nor will our groaning cease but with our breathing. We shall have to groan over our carnality, worldliness, concupiscence, dulness, deadness, darkness, and unbelief. We shall groan for liberty, holiness, and perfect, uninterrupted peace. We *do* groan now, as some of us have for years; and we *shall* groan until mortality is swallowed up of life. We shall go down to the grave groaning; but from thence the ransomed of the Lord shall re-

turn with singing, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. My brother, is thy poor body the seat of disease, of strong pain? Dost thou feel fettered by it, and pent up in it? Art thou groaning as a poor prisoner for freedom? Lift up thy head, for thy redemption draweth nigh. The resurrection morning will soon break on this groaning world, and then the last groan of God's Church will be lost in everlasting songs. Jesus is coming; and when he comes, then will come the world's jubilee. Every fetter will then be knocked off, every prison-door will be opened, every sufferer will enjoy freedom from pain, and every form of disease will flee away. The poor tent will become a building of God, a glorious residence, a magnificent mansion for the soul.

"We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."—ROM. viii. 23.

THE COMPLAINT.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—ROM. vii. 24.

AS Christians, we have not only troubles without, but we have trials within; and soul troubles are the greatest troubles. Every believer feels, that when he would do good, evil is present with him; that he has a law in his members warring against the law of his mind; that, like the Roman criminal, he has a dead body fastened to him. The old man of sin and the new man of grace inhabit the same soul; and between them there is a perpetual warfare. From the one proceed evil thoughts, vile lusts, carnal desires, corrupt inclinations, and a number of evils too vile to enumerate: from the other flow holy aspirations, spiritual desires, heavenly affections, and earnest pantings for perfect holiness. The flesh works, and mars our very best performances: the Spirit works, and prevents our yielding to its base inclinations. We would

do good, only good; but evil, powerful evil, is present with us. The body of death hinders us in duty, and often spoils our enjoyment of our privileges. Thus, like the Shulamite, we have in us two armies; and these armies are perpetually at war; and if at any time there seems to be an armistice, then is the time of our greatest danger. Oh, for grace to crucify the old man with his deeds; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness! But, blessed be God, the warfare will soon be over, the conflict will soon cease. We shall soon be perfectly holy, and then we shall be perfectly happy. The old man must die—he is under the sentence of death now; and the new man must reign, and rule one whole person without a rival. Oh, glorious prospect of eternal freedom from all sin!

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."—GAL. v. 17.

THE PRAYER.

"Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble."
Ps. xxxi. 9.

PRAYER is always a privilege, but it is a special privilege in the times of trouble. What should we have done sometimes but for prayer! When the heart was overcharged with grief, when the body was reduced by disease, when property melted like snow, and the grave closed over our loved ones, what should we have done but for prayer! Then we poured out our hearts before the Lord, then we appealed to the almighty Ruler, then we cried to the Disposer of all events, then we sought fellowship with the Resurrection and the Life; and in prayer we were comforted, and in answer to prayer made a match for our troubles. Christian, in thy trouble appeal to thy God, appeal to his mercy. Mercy always sympathizes with misery, and feels for the distressed. The mercy of thy God is vast as infinity, and tenderer than the tenderest

mother's heart. He will listen to thee, sympathize with thee, appear for thee, and bring thee to bless him for the very trouble that now makes thee groan. How often is it repeated in his Word, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses." Pray on therefore, though the more you pray, the more your troubles may seem to increase,—for this is sometimes the case; yet prayer, if it be the prayer of the heart, will certainly prevail. God cannot refuse to hear the cries of his afflicted ones, or to answer the prayers of his children in trouble. His word is passed, and cannot be recalled. His heart is love, and cannot be unaffected. His resources are infinite, and cannot be exhausted. He will therefore be *very gracious* unto thee at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear he will answer thee.

"Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble."—Ps. cxliii. 11.

AN ANTIDOTE.

"None of us liveth to himself."—ROM. xiv. 7.

THE tried Christian should never dwell on his troubles. Trouble comes to furnish him with a message to the Lord, and to drive him out of his present state and condition; therefore many of the Lord's people have found great relief in trouble by actively engaging in the Lord's service. My tried friend, go, if thou canst, to the chamber of the sick, and speak of Jesus to them. Go to the desolate home of the widow, listen to her tale of sorrow, and endeavour to dry her tears. Take her fatherless children by the hand, and speak loving words to them of a Father in heaven. Go to the poor labourer's cottage, where there are many wants and few comforts, and represent Jesus there, speaking of him and acting for him. Look at the sufferings of others, and try to relieve them. Look at the wants of others, and try to supply

them. Look at the ignorance of others, and endeavour to instruct them. It is by doing good that we get good. Be active for thy Saviour, and thou shalt be comforted by thy Saviour. The way to increase sorrow is to dwell upon it; and the way to obtain relief from sorrow is to act for Jesus notwithstanding it. The action of fresh air on the nerves, the action of God's truth on the mind, and the action of another's sorrow on thy heart, will relieve, reanimate, and restore to comfort those who go forth as messengers of mercy; while those who confine themselves at home, dwelling on their griefs and woes, will continue depressed and sad. While, therefore, you rely on the Lord's promise, be active in the Lord's service, and energetic in the Lord's cause. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich; but the slothful soul shall suffer hunger." This is as true in spirituals as in temporals.

"We should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him that died for us, and rose again."—2 COR. v. 15.

DIVINE SYMPATHY.

'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." —Isa. lxiii. 9.

HOW sweet is sympathy! Yet human sympathy is very often feeble—it may soothe, but cannot help. The kind visit, the loving word, is at times precious; but they reach not our case, they bring us no permanent relief. Love is often without power to assist the beloved object. Not so when God loveth; for then the loving heart moves an omnipotent arm, and opens infinite resources. But there is something astounding in the thought, that the afflictions of a worm—a sinful worm—should afflict the heart of the Infinite, the heart of God. Yet such is the testimony of his own Word. What an expression of love is that! "They put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and *his soul was grieved*

for the misery of Israel." What exquisite tenderness is manifested when the God of the universe declares, "*He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*"! Tried fellow-traveller, when thy road is rough, when thy strength is small, when thy heart is pained, when thy sighs are heavy, God sympathizes with thee. His eye sees, his ear hears, and his heart feels: for "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." Believe this, and be sad if thou canst. Believe this, and complain if you dare. Believe this rather, and go on thy way rejoicing. What can you desire more? God your father,—God, as a father, pitying you,—pitying you as his beloved child;—the sympathy of God should be thy solace, thy comfort, and thy joy.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."—HEB. iv. 15.

THE PERSUASION.

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me."
Ps. cxxxviii. 7.

SOME of the Lord's family are peculiarly tried. Trouble seems to come upon them from every quarter. They appear to be surrounded by it. They have trouble in the world—business tries them. They have trouble in the family—children try them. They have trouble in the Church—fellow-members try them. They have trouble in their own souls, for Satan, doubts, fears, and inward corruption try them. They must go forward, but they walk in the midst of trouble. Onlookers wonder how they bear up, how they persevere. But there is a secret, which observers cannot see. The Lord revives his tried ones. Sometimes some precious portion of his Word falls on the spirit like the dew upon the grass. At other times the Holy Spirit breathes on the soul, like the breezes from the everlasting hills. Now Jesus, the Sun of Right-

eousness, breaks out and shines on them, like nature's sun on the stormy day. Then in prayer the soul is drawn out, and mounts upward, and holds such communion with God as resembles bathing in the river of pleasure. The ordinances of God's house are really means of grace; and reading God's Word is like walking with unfallen Adam in his paradise. These revivals are precious. They cause faith to fasten on the promise afresh, hope looks forward to the rest that remaineth anew, and love ascends and finds its centre and its solace in the perfections of the Most High. O for more of these reviving seasons! My God, thou hast said, "I will be as the dew unto Israel, and he shall revive as the corn." Fulfil this precious promise daily in my soul.

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."—HOSEA vi. 3.

THE DESIGN.

"We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; they chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."—HEB. xii. 9, 10.

BELIEVER, art thou afflicted? Art thou severely tried? Does trouble after trouble roll over thee? What is the cause? There must be one. What is the design? Hast thou inquired? If not, inquire now. Why does God try me so? Does he hate me? No. Is he wrathful? No; he hath sworn that he will not be wroth with thee. Why then is it? God intends to make thee holy—to make thee like himself. He is weaning thee from the creature. He is wearying thee of earth. He intends to raise thy thoughts, desires, and hopes to heaven. He is detaching and separating thee from what pollutes and defiles, that he may polish and brighten thee, to catch and reflect the rays of his glory in his presence for ever. You have

prayed to be made holy. God has heard your prayer. He approved of it; he is answering it. By his present dealings, which he will sanctify by the power of his Holy Spirit, he will prepare thee to glorify him on earth, and make thee meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. His design is most gracious, every way worthy of himself; and you will see by-and-by that love and wisdom appointed and arranged every trial you are now passing through. Submit yourself, therefore, unto God; accept his corrections, nor ever complain of his dealings. He treats you as his child. He corrects thee for thy good. He prepares you for what he has prepared for you. He will make you a vessel of mercy, afore prepared unto glory. In eternity you will bless him for the discipline of time.

"He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin."—ISA. xxvii. 8, 9.

THE CALCULATION.

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."—ROM. viii. 18.

THE sufferings of the Lord's people are often severe and protracted. But, however severe, however protracted, the sufferings of the believer may at present be, there is no comparison between them and the glories that await him. He is now under training. He is a child preparing to take possession of a glorious inheritance. The discipline he is now under is painful, but the result will be seen in the future. He is educating for eternity. There is a hope laid up for him in heaven. There is a weight of glory in reserve for him. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him." There is a glory for the body, like that which shone forth in the body of Jesus on the mount of trans-

figuration. There is a glory for the soul, which will very much consist in perfect knowledge, perfect holiness, exact conformity to the soul of Jesus, and the beatific vision of God. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." But words are wanting, thoughts fail, when our attention is directed to the glory that shall be revealed in us. Even John knew not what was comprised in it. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Let this calm thy mind and quiet thy spirit, that glory is prepared for thee, and will be revealed in thee; and that there is no comparison between what thou art suffering now and what thou wilt enjoy then.

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—COL. iii. 4.

GOD'S DETERMINATION.

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."
ISA. xlvi. 10.

GOD never acts at random. His plan is drawn. His purposes are fixed. He steadily pursues his end. Resistance is vain: it is sin. It brings punishment on the sinner, and correction on the saint. Submission is at all times a duty. Resignation ought ever to characterize us. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." His omnipotence is engaged to carry out his designs; and "he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: no one can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Believer, the Lord taketh pleasure in thy person, and in thy spiritual prosperity. He is pleased with whatever advances thy spirituality, perfects thy character, increases thy real happiness, and adds splendour to thy crown. Hence

said the apostle, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." You wondered at the afflictions of the saints; do you wonder now? They are to add weight and brilliance to their crowns. Sanctified afflictions are among our choicest blessings. Let us, therefore, pray that our afflictions may be sanctified; and to be kept from striving with our Maker, reflecting upon his wisdom, and grieving his love. In our best moments we can thank God for the immutability of his counsel, and the changeless nature of his decrees. A God of love can only pass loving decrees respecting his children; and such are all God's purposes respecting you. O Lord, fulfil in us all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power!

"The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."—Ps. xxxiii. 11.

THE DESIRE.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."
MATT. vi. 10.

GOD'S will must be wise and holy, therefore God's will should rule. God willeth nothing for us but what is consistent with his love to us and concern for us. Nor are we at a loss to know the turn that God's will takes towards us: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." God wills, first his own glory; and in subordination to that, our present and everlasting welfare. It is therefore our wisdom to pray that God's will may always, everywhere and in everything, be done. And it is our happiness to acquiesce always, and in everything, in God's will. Indeed we can never be happy if our wills run contrary to God's will, or if they run beside it. We must be *little children.* We must endeavour to ascertain what is our Father's will, and be pleased with that. If God wills me poverty or plenty, health or sickness, pleasure or pain, pub-

licity or obscurity, life or death, I should be satisfied with it; I should approve of it; more, I should be pleased with it,—so pleased with it, that if the turning of a straw would make the least difference in it, I should refuse to turn that straw. This would be to treat God as God, and to act just as a simple, ignorant, inexperienced child should act. Lord Jesus, send the blessed Comforter, to direct my will into the channel of God's will, and to keep it there. I can never be happy while my will crosses thy will: teach me, therefore, to give up my will; and bring me into that state, that I may not have a wish, but just to be, to do, to enjoy, or to suffer as God willeth. O for that depth of holiness, that I may ever cry with thee, "Not my will, but thine be done!"

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."—MATT. xxvi. 39.

AN EXAMPLE.

"He endured, as seeing him who is invisible."
HEB. xi. 27.

MOSES had much to suffer; and who has not, if loved and honoured of God? Satan and the world are leagued against God's children. In Egypt, they are persecuted and ruled by their carnal neighbours; in the desert, they are tried by a variety of vexing dispensations; and in Canaan, or the Church of God, they often meet with enough to make them weary of life. But Moses *endured;* he bore his trials patiently. He pressed on, notwithstanding difficulties; he courageously faced a proud and angry monarch at God's bidding. How was this? He realized the presence of an invisible God. He kept his eye fixed on the Most High. He feared his frown; he dreaded his displeasure: he sought his favour; he prized his blessing. If God is with us, all will be well. But God is with us, though unseen. Let us, therefore, endeavour to suffer, with the eye of

faith fixed on God as our heavenly Father, who will support us; on Jesus, as our great pattern, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame; and on the Holy Spirit, as our present, perpetual, and powerful Comforter. Troubled Christian, God is with thee, only thy natural eye cannot see him. He is supporting thee at this moment. He has promised never, never to leave thee, nor forsake thee. He is faithful to his word, therefore patiently endure until he set thee free. It will not be long ere he will appear for thee, set thee on high from affliction, and make thee full of joy with his countenance. The present is thy worst condition. Once over the Jordan of death, and all will be peace, prosperity, and pleasure.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."—JAMES i. 12.

A PRESCRIPTION.

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."—HEB. xii. 1, 2.

THE world is a race-course, life is a race, and every one of us are racers. A mark is set up, at which we are to aim, and a prize is promised to every overcomer. But there are many difficulties in the way, and we have many weights about us. Those difficulties must be mastered, and those weights must be laid aside. Our easily besetting sin is distrust of God: this must be opposed and laid aside, and we must run with patience the race set before us, keeping the eye on Jesus. Jesus is our example; we must copy him. Jesus is our leader; we must follow him. Jesus is our sovereign; we must submit to him. Jesus is our Saviour; and we must confide alone in him. We must look to his blood for pardon, to his righteousness for justification, to his Spirit for strength, and to his fulness for all our sup-

plies. We must make use of Jesus every day, every hour, every minute. Christian, look to Jesus when discouraged, it will animate you; when timid, it will embolden you; when feeble, it will strengthen you; when weary, it will stimulate you; and when dying, for it will give you the victory. Let thy last look be a look at Jesus. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." No one ever looked to him in vain; but as every one was healed who looked to the brazen serpent, so is every one saved, sanctified, and sustained, who looks to Jesus. Look to him for all you need, and from all you fear. Keep the eye fixed on Jesus; so wilt thou conquer the world, overcome Satan, reach the mark, and obtain the prize.

"They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed."—Ps. xxxiv. 5.

THE SANCTUARY.

"In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock."—Ps. xxvii. 5.

TIMES of trouble are times of danger. But when the child is in danger, the parent is most watchful and concerned. So, believer, thy heavenly Father pays special attention to thee in the time of thy trouble. He will not only keep his eye on thee, but he will hide thee. Where will he hide thee? In some house, or fortress, or granite rock? No; but in his pavilion. The pavilion is the royal tent, and is placed in the centre of the army, surrounded by the strongest and most courageous soldiers. Here the king dwells, and here, if anywhere, safety is to be found. Sweet thought this for thee, poor tried one—God will take thee to his own tent! he will make thee safe as himself! In the pavilion of thy God thou wilt find supplies for thy wants, balm for thy wounds, and solace for thy sorrows. Many

a Christian has seen more of God, and enjoyed more of the presence of God, in one week's affliction, than in years beside. In his pavilion God communes with his troubled ones; he opens his heart to them, he lifts up the light of his countenance upon them, and he gives them peace. Blessed Lord, in all times of my trouble bring me into thy pavilion, hide me in the secret of thy tabernacle; that I may know the blessedness of having my life hid with Christ in God. My soul, in every time of trouble or of trial repair to thy God, plead with him, and let this be thy prayer: "Keep me as the apple of the eye: hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Then thou wilt have to exclaim with joy, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! therefore the sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."—Ps. xc. 1.

THE BEST COMPANION.

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him."—Ps. xci. 15.

BELIEVERS sometimes fancy themselves alone in their troubles, and they feel sad and solitary. Christian friends forget or neglect to call on them, and this grieves them. But if this page meet the eye of such an one, I would say,—My friend, grieve not; refreshing as the presence and spiritual communications of a fellow Christian may be, you can do without them. For surely the presence of the Master is far better than the visits of the servant; and he has said of every tried believer, "*I will be with him in trouble.*" Precious words these! But mistake not—the Lord's presence can only be realized by faith. The benefit of his presence is received, when the pleasure of his presence is not enjoyed for the want of faith. He never fails to fulfil his promise, though for want of faith we may fail to enjoy

it. His presence supports when it does not comfort; and keeps us back from evil when it does not fill us with joy. Blessed Lord, thou hast ever been with thy people in all their trials and troubles, and thou art with every tried believer now; and not only so, but thou wilt deliver them in six troubles, and in seven thou wilt not forsake them! We find that thy grace is sufficient for us; and as our day, so is our strength. Be especially with us in our present troubles; and not only so, but let us realize and enjoy thy presence. We want to feel thy love, to enjoy the light of thy countenance; and, as the result, to glorify thee in the fires. O Jesus, as thou wast with the Hebrews in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, be with us in every fiery trial!

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."—ISA. xliii. 1, 2.

PRESENT REPOSE.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."—ISA. xxvi. 3.

CONFIDENCE in God will keep the mind steady in the wildest storm, and under the heaviest trials. God's covenant character is the repose of the soul; in that we are to trust, on that we are to stay ourselves. And he that believeth that God is gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth, and that he intends to display and illustrate these glorious perfections in his experience, will find his mind calm, and his soul enjoying repose, under all the changing circumstances of time. Taking the eye off creatures, circumstances, and self, and fixing it intently upon God as revealed in Jesus, and as working all things after the counsel of his own will, will bring rest to the soul, and preserve the mind in peace. Let the spirit be but stayed on God as love, and let the heart trust in God's truth, faithfulness, and immuta-

bility, and there will be "peace, peace." But the moment it is taken off the Lord, there will be agitation, fear, and painful perplexity. Like Peter on the water, so long as he kept his eye on Jesus, he was safe,—he could tread the waves under his feet; but the moment he began to listen to the winds, and look at the billows, that moment he began to sink. Just so it is with us; let us therefore seek grace, to trust in the Lord at all times, and stay ourselves upon our God. Gracious Saviour, thou didst stretch forth thine hand to catch sinking Peter; let thy hand hold us, and let thy loving voice cheer and refresh us under all our changing frames and sinking feelings! Underneath us place thine everlasting arms.

"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places; when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place."—ISA. xxxii. 18, 19.

THE LOVING LOOK.

"Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction."
GEN. xxix. 32.

SO said Leah, when the Lord granted her a son. Barrenness had been her trial; but now the Lord looked upon her, and blessed her. The Lord's look performs wonders. It filled the Egyptians with perplexity and distress, but it brought Israel relief and comfort. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." Sufferer, the eye of God is upon thee. He knows where thou art, what thou art suffering from, and the degree of thy pain and sorrow. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." Thou canst not be concealed from him. The eye of his mercy lingers over thee, until the hand of his power is stretched out to deliver thee. His eye affecteth his heart, therefore he sympathizes with thee. He is looking upon thy affliction now, and only waits the fittest time to appear

for thy rescue. Look up to him, as he is looking down upon thee, and let the eye of thy faith meet the eye of his mercy. Look up through thy tears, for there is eloquence in the tears of his children; and as thou lookest, cry, with David, "Look thou upon me, and be gracious unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name." Think how Jesus looked on backsliding Peter, till he looked him into penitence and prayer; and how he looked on dying Stephen, until he looked him into meekness and courage. The look of Jesus will strengthen thy faith, animate thy hope, inflame thy love, brighten thy evidences, and increase thy courage. O Jesus, let me daily realize that thine eye is upon me, that thou art watching over me to do me good, and that thy loving eye will preserve me from hidden evils and crafty foes!

"And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."—EXODUS ii. 25.

CHANGELESS FRIENDSHIP.

"He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee."—JOB v. 19.

FRIEND, has not the Lord often delivered thee? Aged believer, thou canst bear thy testimony to the fact that "the righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Past deliverances insure future interpositions. Thy troubles will be successive, but God's deliverances will be successive too. Seven is the number of perfection, and is designed to teach us that the Lord will deliver us, until deliverance is no longer needed. Having delivered us when dead in trespasses and sins, having brought us into an experimental acquaintance with himself, and having set us apart for his glory and praise, is it not ungrateful, is it not very sinful, especially as we have his positive promise to the opposite, if we doubt that he will yet deliver us? With our God there can be no difficulty; for infinite wis-

dom and omnipotent power prevent it. With our God there can be no want of love; for his love is from everlasting to everlasting, without variation or the shadow of a turn. With our God there can be no want of a reason why he should deliver us; for he has made us his children, and bound up his own glory with our present and everlasting welfare. The Psalmist points us to one case, as a sample of the whole: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." So will it be with every praying soul,—there will be a last trouble and a final deliverance. At death, the soul will be delivered from sin, Satan, and the world; and at the first resurrection, the body will be delivered from corruption: and so shall we be ever with the Lord.

"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."—2 COR. i. 10.

THE CERTAIN RESULT.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—ROM. viii. 28.

HAT a blessed assurance is this! *All things*, whether painful or pleasant, spiritual or temporal, all things are overruled and directed to do us good. They *work together*. They are connected as the links in a chain; as different drugs in one medicine, they mutually act upon and assist each other. For *our good*—our present and everlasting welfare: to prevent sin, and deepen our sanctification; to wean from earth, and qualifv us for heaven; to exercise our graces, and mortify our lusts; to employ our gifts, and extend our usefulness. Trials lead to triumphs, and conflicts to conquests. The good Lord purposed to call us by his grace, and according to his purpose he did so. He has shed abroad his love in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, and we love him in return. Now,

as his beloved and loving children, his heart is set upon our best interests; and he so works, by his providence, his Word, and his Spirit, as not only to prevent our being injured, but that we shall be really benefited, by all that happens to us. So that, in reference to every trial, exercise, pain, pleasure, loss, or acquirement, we may say, This shall work for my good; this will meeten me for heaven, and fit me to glorify God more and more. My soul, never forget, in the dark night of sorrow, desertion, sickness, and pain, that all things are working together for thy good, even when thou art suffering most. The present is connected with the future; time runs into eternity; and thy present sufferings in Christ's cause work out for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them."

"Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him."—ECCLES. viii. 12.

ENDLESS REST.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."
HEB. iv. 9.

HOW sweet is rest to the weary! yet how little rest do some of the Lord's people enjoy here! But the troubled spirit shall rest in the presence and enjoyment of its God; and the poor, wearied, and diseased body shall find rest in the grave. Weariness is limited to time, but our rest will be lasting as eternity. There are no weary heads, or weary limbs, or weary hearts, on the other side Jordan. The rest of heaven will be the sweeter for the toils of earth; the value of eternal rest will be enhanced by the troubles of time. Jesus now allows us to rest on his bosom; he will soon bring us to rest in his Father's house. His rest will be glorious—a rest from sin, a rest from suffering, a rest from conflict, a rest from toil, a rest from sorrow;—the very rest that Jesus himself enjoys. We shall not only rest *with* him, we shall rest *like*

him. How many of earth's wearied ones are resting in his glorious presence now! It will be undisturbed rest. Here the rest of the body is disturbed by dreams, and sometimes by alarms; but there are no troublesome dreams or alarming occurrences there. Thanks be unto God for the rest we now enjoy *in* Christ! Ten thousand thanks to God for the rest we shall soon enjoy *with* Christ! Wearied one, look away from the cause of thy present suffering, and remember there is a rest remaining for thee. A little while, and thou shalt enter into rest. A little while, and thou shalt see Jesus as he is, be filled with his love, and enjoy uninterrupted rest in his presence. Weariness, languor, and pain are for time; rest, peace, and pleasure are thy eternal portion.

"Ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you."—DEUT. xii. 9.

PREPARATION.

"Be ye all ready."—JOSHUA viii. 4.

THE Christian should be ready for every event. Provision is made for him, promises are given to him, examples are set before him, and exhortations are delivered to him. The Master's word is, "*Be ready*;"—ready to meet, endure, and derive benefit from your troubles; ready to meet thy foes, especially the last enemy. Death will come, but we know not when, where, nor how; therefore we should be always prepared, having our accounts settled, our work forward, and our affections set on heavenly things—ready for the coming of Jesus. He will come in like manner as he went into heaven. We must *meet* him, *face* him, and be *presented* to him. The appearing of Jesus should be the object of our liveliest hopes, warmest desires, and sweetest anticipations. We should look for the coming of Jesus as the wandering traveller for his *path;*

as the Eastern watchman for the morning; as the bride for the expected bridegroom; and as the bondman for the morning of emancipation. My brother, let me at parting say to thee, "*Be ready*," Jesus is coming. Soon, very soon, the cry may be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." Oh, to have our loins girt, our lamps burning, and our hearts crying out, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" In this state we are prepared for labour or for rest, for life or for death, to remain here or depart to be for ever with the Lord. Holy Spirit, daily anoint thy people; that they, experiencing thy renewings, may look, long, watch, and pray for the coming of their Lord! Thrice blessed event! may the Lord hasten it, for my soul longs to share in it!

"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."—MATT. xxiv. 44.

THE EXCEPTION.

"They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued as other men."—Ps. lxxiii. 5

THE tried Christian sometimes looks around upon the ungodly, and wonders at God's dealings with them. Judging by sense, he is stumbled, until, like Asaph, he repairs to the sanctuary or the Word. Yes, how often is it the case that the saint is poor, and the sinner rich; the saint is sickly, and the sinner healthy; the saint is deformed, and the sinner is well shaped; the saint struggles but cannot succeed in temporal things, while the sinner seems to get wealth without difficulty! How is this? Is there not a providence? Does not God love his people? Yes; but God deals with saints in time in reference to eternity. The present is preparatory to the future. Envy not the sinner, and choose none of his ways. The present is all the pleasant he will have. He has his good things now, and the believer has his evil things. He may

write after every day's sinful pleasure, after carnal amusement, and after acquisition of property, "*After this the judgment.*" The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Contrast their end, their eternal portion, and then thou wilt bless God if he has put thee among his poor, tried, and afflicted people. Dwell not on present appearances, but remember they stand on slippery places, and will soon be cast down into destruction. Sinner! thy prosperity is thy snare. Thou hast thy best now; and dying out of Christ, all that remains for thee is an eternity of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Flee, oh, flee to Jesus for life and peace!

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 COR. iv. 18.

THE COMFORTER A DIVINE PERSON.

"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?..Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."—ACTS v. 3, 4.

EVERYTHING that characterizes a person is ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. He is said to be sent, to come, to act. He teaches, leads, and guides. He speaks, reveals, and witnesses. He is vexed, grieved, and resisted. He is a divine person, equal with the Father and the Son, in power, majesty, and glory. He is associated with the Father and the Son in the ordinance of baptism; for we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He is associated also with the Father and the Son in the apostolic benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Is the Father a person? so is the Holy Spirit. Is the Father divine? so is the Holy Spirit. All the attri-

butes of Godhead are ascribed to him; and he is entitled to the worship, glory, and honour of the Church, equally with the Father and the Son. Every personal pronoun is used when speaking of him in the Word, and every personal act is ascribed to him. Distinct *from* the Father and the Son, he is one *with* the Father and the Son, and possesses in himself the fulness of the divine nature, being naturally, essentially, and eternally God. O Holy Spirit, give us clear views of thy distinct personality, divine nature, and essential glory! Let us see thee in thy Word, feel thee in our hearts, and enjoy sweet communion with thee day by day! Breathe on us, we beseech thee; abide with us, and work in us both to will and to do of thy good pleasure. Pull down every stronghold of Satan, pull up every root of bitterness, and conform us in all things to our Divine Example.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?...Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost."—1 COR. iii. 16; vi. 19.

THE HOLY SPIRIT A COMFORTER.

"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."—JOHN xvi. 7.

THE Lord's people need a Comforter; for, O how much have they to render them unhappy! What with sin within them, the world without them, and Satan constantly trying to distress and cast them down, they have enough to dishearten and distress them. Then, there are the cares of business, the trials of the family, the oppression of the great, the sufferings of the poor, and the state of the Church, all combining to fill them with grief and sorrow. Under these circumstances, human comforters are feeble and inefficient. God alone can impart the consolation needed. In order to meet the case, the Holy Spirit has condescended to assume the office of Comforter. He is intrusted with all the fulness of Jesus; he knows all the thoughts of the Father; he has examined all the stores of grace, and is perfectly acquainted with all the

riches of glory: and with these he is to comfort the Lord's people. He knows every saint and every circumstance; he knows every foe and every temptation. He can gain access to the heart, and he can impart the comfort we require. He turns the eye to Jesus; he excites in us confidence in God; he begets lively hopes of glory; he applies the promises; he sprinkles the atoning blood; he whispers peace; he teaches our hands to war, and our fingers to fight; yea, he comforts us in all our tribulations; and so comforts us as to imbitter sin, endear the Saviour, and produce greater love to holiness. O Holy Spirit, may we never quench thy influences, grieve thy love, or slight thy intimations; but may we be led by thee, be taught of thee, and possess thee as the earnest of our inheritance.

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted."—ISA. lxvi. 13.

THE ABIDING OF THE COMFORTER.

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth."—JOHN xiv. 16, 17.

JESUS came to comfort his people for a time, and to lay a firm foundation for their everlasting consolation. Jesus is the great source of comfort, and all spiritual comfort is based on his perfect work. It was necessary for him to return to his Father, that in the presence of God he may ever make intercession for us. But he sent the Spirit, to abide with the Church for ever. That Spirit, which came at Pentecost, has never left the Church; and he never will. He represents Jesus in the Church. He acts for Jesus; he glorifies Jesus. Much has been done calculated to drive him away; but in faithful love, he still abides with us. Just so, when he once takes possession of the believer in the name of Jesus, he transforms him into a

temple, consecrates him to the Saviour's praise, and retains possession of him for ever. He is often grieved by us. He often reproves us; he withholds his comforting influences from us; he refuses to shine on our evidences, or witness to our adoption; but he never leaves us, he never forsakes us. He abides with us for ever. Blessed, soul-comforting truth this! Oh, if it were possible for the Holy Spirit to abandon his temples, to give up his charge, or to discard his disobedient scholars, I had been discarded long ago! But still he strives, still he works, still he conquers; and with weeping and with supplication we return to the Lord, from whom we have so deeply revolted. Oh, thou blessed Spirit, I praise thee for the constancy and forbearance of thy love! Still abide with me, reveal Jesus more clearly to me, and fill me with all joy and peace in believing on him.

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—JOHN iv. 14.

THE COMFORTER OMNIPRESENT.

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."—Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8.

THE presence of a friend is always cheering; but to have a bosom friend, who feels the deepest interest in us, and in all that concerns us, and to have that friend always with us, what a comfort is that! The Holy Spirit is such a friend; and he is ever with us. As God, he *can* be everywhere present; and as a covenant God, he has *promised* to be everywhere present and always present with believers in Jesus. Nor is he merely present; he is present to instruct our minds, correct our faults, reprove our follies, revive our graces, bring truth to our remembrance, brighten our evidences, sanctify our souls, and comfort us under all our trials. He will never leave us nor forsake us. Grieved by us, he may refuse to comfort us, witness to our adoption, or cry, "Abba, Father," within us; but

he will still work, in producing conviction, awakening distress, filling us with sorrow, and piercing us with remorse, in order to recover and bring us back. He will never forsake the work of his own hands. He will never quite give us up. Let us, therefore, endeavour to realize always and everywhere, "The Holy Spirit is with me; he observes my ways, marks my motives, listens to my words, and is either pleased or grieved by my conduct." This would preserve us from sowing to the flesh, from which we can only reap corruption; and would lead us to sow to the Spirit, from which we shall reap life everlasting. O my soul, remember that the Holy Spirit is ever with thee, ready to bless thee, and to unfold the truth to thee. He is thy daily teacher, thy constant monitor, and thy faithful friend; therefore aim so to walk as always and in all things to please him.

"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—1 Cor. ii. 10.

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God."—ROM. xv. 19.

ALL the wondrous miracles wrought by the apostles, and the glorious work of grace wrought in the hearts of primitive believers, are ascribed to the power of the Spirit of God. There can be no real religion without power, and no power is sufficient to produce real religion but the power of the Spirit. The apostles were commanded to wait at Jerusalem, after they were commissioned to preach the gospel, until they were endued with power from on high. The Spirit, to represent his power and manner of working, is compared to the three most powerful elements,—wind, fire, and water. His power subdues the sinner's corruptions; wins his heart for Christ; transforms him into the likeness of Christ; and makes him, though but a worm, victorious over all his foes. Through the indwelling of the Spirit, we have power with God,

power over Satan, power with sinners, and power with saints. We can do all things, and bear all sufferings, through the power of the Spirit of God. This power is just what the Church of God needs, in order to her increase, union among her members, and deeper sanctification; and this is just what individual Christians need, to fill them with joy, separate them from the world, and enable them to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. But we do not realize our need of the power of the Spirit as we should, and therefore we do not seek it as we ought. Yet we must have it, if much good is to be done; and we have no right to expect it without earnest pleading for it. Spirit of God, as the Spirit of power, dwell in my heart, subduing my lusts, purifying my affections, and conforming me to the Lord Jesus in all things!

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—2 TIM. i. 7.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE SPIRIT.

"All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."—1 Cor. xii. 11.

THE gifts, operations, and communications of the Spirit in the primitive Church, were numerous and various, and they were sovereignly bestowed. No one had any claim, nor had any one cause to complain. Just so now. The Holy Spirit, being God, is invested with, and continually exercises, a divine sovereignty. In the calling of the saints, he exercises sovereignty as to the time, the means, and the manner of calling them. So, as to the qualifications of the saints for usefulness, he gives just what kind and what number of gifts he pleases. In blessing the Word, too, the Holy Spirit worketh as he will: he convinces one, reproves another, and comforts a third. He always humbles the sinner, exalts the Saviour, and magnifies the free grace of God. But in so doing, he exercises his adorable sovereignty. Yet this sove-

reignty of the Spirit is so exercised as not to interfere with man's responsibility or accountability. Nor does it render the use of means unnecessary, but rather the more necessary, as it is by means, and by what means he pleases, that he works and makes his communications. He presides in the Church, he works in every part of the Church, he manages all the concerns of the Church; and he does all in the name of Jesus, and for his honour and glory. As Divine, he can do all things; as Sovereign, he does what he will; but being LOVE, whatever he does is for our present and everlasting good. Blessed Spirit, work in me to will and to do of thy own good pleasure! Work in me, that I may work out my own salvation with fear and trembling; and work in the Lord's vineyard for the Lord's glory.

"God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."—HEB. ii. 4.

THE SPIRIT NEW CREATING.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."—JOHN iii. 6, 7.

LIKE begets its like. Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image. By nature we are all carnal, corrupt, and depraved, bearing the image of the earthly Adam. In this state we cannot perceive the nature, or enter into the enjoyment of the privileges, of God's kingdom: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." This renders the Spirit's work absolutely necessary: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The Holy Spirit generates a new nature, and we become new creatures; in consequence of which we perceive the spirituality of God's law, our entirely fallen and totally depraved condition, the impossibility of salva-

tion except it be of grace, the exact suitability of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the great importance of an interest in him. From this new creation proceeds a thirsting, desiring, and longing for Christ; then the heart goes out after Christ; then the soul closes with Christ; and at length the man becomes one with Christ. Resting alone on Christ, and living in fellowship with Christ, the believer becomes conformed to Christ, and reflects the image of Christ, so that all around perceive the change. The man lives not henceforth to the lusts of the flesh, but to the will of God. The life that he lives in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God; and he is manifestly declared to be an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."—ROM. viii. 5.

THE SPIRIT CONVINCING OF SIN.

"He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me."
JOHN xvi. 8, 9.

TO "reprove" is to convince, and so to convince as to reprove and condemn. The law convinces of sin in general, and condemns for it. Here the Spirit is said to convince of sin in general, but more particularly of the sin of unbelief. You may convince a man that he is a sinner because he has broken the law; but can you convince him that he is a sinner because he does not believe in Christ? The Holy Spirit places before the mind the facts, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; that he is able and willing to save any sinner; that he wishes sinners to come to him and be saved: and then he convinces the man that he has not believed and acted on the word of Christ, and that this is his sin. We ought to believe on Christ, for God commands it: "This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of

his Son Jesus Christ." To this end the New Testament was written: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Salvation is promised to believing: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Damnation is the penalty of disbelieving: "He that believeth not shall be damned." Every man ought to receive Christ, or reject him; to believe on Christ, or treat him with contempt. Unbelief treats Christ with the greatest possible contempt, and is therefore the sin that seals our condemnation, and leaves us without hope. Oh, to see that disbelieving God's testimony is a great sin, that we may believe in Jesus to the saving of the soul! Spirit of faith, work faith in my heart, that I may not only believe to the saving of my soul, but to the glory and praise of God.

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."—JOHN iii. 19.

THE SPIRIT CONVINCING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

'He will reprove the world of righteousness, because I go to my Father."—JOHN xvi. 8, 10.

HE shall convince us that the claims of Jesus were just, that the character of Jesus was perfect, and that his obedience to the law was complete; so that under his teaching we shall believe that Jesus was innocent of every charge brought against him, that he was the Son of God, and that he wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, by which every believer is justified before God. He shows us that we have no righteousness of our own, that we must have one or miserably perish, that Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, and that whosoever believeth in him is justified from all things. We see that God must be righteous, and therefore he cannot justify any person without a righteousness; that we have no righteousness

of our own, and therefore we cannot be justified in the sight of God. Then he shows us that Jesus has wrought out a perfect righteousness; and that this is imputed to, or placed to the account of, and conferred on, every one that believeth, and in this righteousness we are justified. Now the sinner renounces himself and all his own works entirely, and is right glad to receive Jesus to be his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The Holy Spirit works faith in the heart, which faith embraces Christ as he is revealed in the gospel; and from that moment Christ becomes our all and in all. Thus, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. O Jesus, I adore thee as the Just One, and rejoice in thee as having wrought out and brought in a righteousness for the justification of my soul. Holy Spirit, exalt Christ before me more and more.

"To declare at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—ROM. iii. 26.

THE SPIRIT CONVINCING OF JUDGMENT.

"He will reprove the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."—JOHN xvi. 8, 11.

HE shows that God is just, and hath prepared his throne for judgment; that he hath fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, hath appointed his own Son to be the Judge, and hath decided to reward every one according to his works. The great proof produced is, that even the prince of this world has been judged and condemned in the death of Christ, and is now awaiting the full execution of the tremendous sentence passed on him. In addition to this, a bar of equity is erected in the sinner's conscience. Before this he is obliged to appear: his sins are placed in array before him; his mouth is stopped; he is brought in guilty, and sentence of death is recorded against him. He gives himself up for lost, for he sees that by the deeds of the law shall no

flesh living be justified. Then the gospel is unfolded to his mind, the way of escape is pointed out, and he flees for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him. He betakes himself to Jesus, receives the Scripture testimony concerning Christ, and ventures on him alone for salvation. He pleads his blood for pardon, his obedience for justification, and his word that the Spirit of grace may sanctify his nature and make him meet for heaven. He is convinced of judgment, for he has experienced it on a small scale in his own soul; and he has no doubt but all must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. He commits his soul to Jesus, and, from a personal knowledge of him, is persuaded that he is able to keep that which he has intrusted to his care. He walks wisely in the world, cautiously in the family, and prudently in the Church; knowing that every one of us must give account of himself to God.

"He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."—ACTS xvii. 31.

THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT.

"The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you."—1 JOHN ii. 27.

THIS anointing is the communication of the Holy Spirit to the believer. Jesus gives the Comforter; the Comforter consecrates the believer, and he becomes a king and a priest unto God. The Holy Spirit becomes his teacher; and with the Word of God in his hand and the Holy Spirit in his heart, he needs no new revelation. He has the truth, the whole truth; which truth the Holy Spirit will gradually unfold to his understanding and apply to his heart, so that it will become in him the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul. For all that we know of ourselves, for all that we know of Jesus, and for all that we know of God as our heavenly Father, we are indebted to the Holy Spirit. He is the great teacher of God's family; he takes of the things of Christ and showeth them

unto us. The teaching of the Holy Spirit runs through the whole of a man's life; and by the dispensations of Divine Providence, especially by our various afflictions and trials, as well as by the inspired Word, he teaches us more and more of our own sinfulness, of the suitability and preciousness of the Lord Jesus, of the infinite love of our heavenly Father, of the emptiness of the present world, and of the superiority of the glory that is to be revealed in us. O thou infinitely blessed Spirit of God, be thou our teacher. May we find that, as the holy anointing, thou abidest in us, revealing Christ more and more unto us, and opening up daily the blessed Word of thy grace unto us. O to know more of Jesus, in his glorious person, perfect work, infinite merits, tender love, and constant care! O to confide in Jesus more, to love Jesus more, and to imitate Jesus more! O may Jesus be our all in all!

"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."—1 JOHN ii. 20.

THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—ROM. viii. 14.

MAN, left to himself, wanders into sin, disgrace, and danger; therefore the Lord gives his Holy Spirit to lead and guide all his children. The Spirit always leads us out of ourselves to Christ—away from our own works to the work of Christ. He leads us to the cross for pardon, to the open fountain for cleansing, to the ordinances for food and refreshment, and to the throne of grace for fellowship, and for help in time of need. He never allows a man to admire his own works or supposed excellences, nor even to rest on His own work in the heart; but leads him to admire the beauties of Christ, and to rest on the finished work of Jesus alone for life and peace. The Spirit always humbles the creature and exalts the Saviour; and if we have much of his presence and grace, Jesus will be exalted, extolled, and set on high by us.

He leads from sin to holiness, from the world to the Church, from things temporal to things spiritual. He leads to self-examination and self-communion, and thus saves from self-deception and many mistakes. He leads from the law to the gospel—from Moses to Christ. He leads us rationally, as men; lovingly, as children; and constantly, as his care and charge. Holy and ever blessed Spirit, lead us evermore by thy counsel, and afterwards receive us to glory. Lead us into a deeper knowledge of Jesus, into closer communion with God; and especially lead us to have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. Lead, O lead us in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment, that we may inherit substance, adorn our profession, and scatter blessings all around us. Lead us to Jesus on his cross, and also to Jesus on his throne.

"If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."—GAL. v. 18.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT.

"God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit."—2 THESS. ii. 13.

TO sanctify, is to separate and set apart for holy purposes and holy uses. The Lord *hath* separated his people, by choosing them in Christ to be holy; and he sanctifies them now for himself, by the power, operation, and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In sanctification we are taken possession of for Christ, we are new-created in Christ, and a work is commenced which is to make us exactly like Christ. A sanctified person has his heart changed, his will renewed, his understanding enlightened, his conscience purified, and his affections spiritualized. Sanctification is commenced in regeneration; but it is not completed then. It is the good work which God begins in us, and which will be completed in the day of Christ. It extends to the whole man, soul and body; and is carried

on through the word, ordinances, and providence of God. Indeed, all things are rendered subservient to it. At first there is the blade, then the ear, and at length the full corn in the ear. We are first babes, then children, then young men, and at length fathers, in Christ. United to Christ, we receive from Christ, are influenced by the Spirit of Christ, and bring forth fruit like Christ. Holiness has its seat in the heart; but it regulates the whole man, and appears in his conduct in every-day life. If a man experiences the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, sin grieves him, Satan tries him, the world troubles him, and heaven attracts him. Spirit of Jesus, sanctify us deeply, thoroughly, that we may be just like Jesus! Sanctify us by every trial, by every ordinance, by every privilege, by every comfort! Sanctify us as thou didst Jesus, that we may resemble him!

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 THESS. v. 23.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."—Rom. viii. 16.

THE Spirit knows all God's children. He witnessed the registering of their names in the book of life; he created them anew in Christ Jesus; he dwells in their hearts; and he bears witness to the glorious fact that they are the children of God. This witness he bears in us when he produces the filial nature, sheds abroad the Father's love, and generates filial and holy confidence in God's paternal character. Sometimes he shines on a promise, brings it home, applies it with power, and gives the inward persuasion that it is ours. Sometimes he enables us so to trace out his own blessed work within us, that we can no more doubt our adoption than we can doubt our creation. Sometimes he softens the heart, fires the affections, soothes the conscience, and whispers "Abba" within the soul; so that we feel impelled to look up and cry, "Doubtless

thou art our Father." At other times, he so shines upon the representations given of the Lord's people in the Word, and then upon his own work in our hearts, that we see clearly that we have all one Father, and compose but one family. And at other times, under an experimental ministry, he enables his servants so to describe character, and point out the marks of the children of God, that they see and recognize their own likeness; and this is accompanied with a sweet persuasive influence, so that to doubt our sonship at such times seems all but impossible. Sacred Spirit, teach my own spirit to trace out and prove its adoption, and then bear thy witness with my spirit that I am a child of God! O scatter doubts, dissipate fears, and fill me with holy confidence! Let the knowledge of my adoption, and the enjoyment of my sonship, be my daily privilege!

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."—1 JOHN v. 10.

THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

"After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."—EPH. i. 13.

THE gift of the Spirit sealed or confirmed the claims, promises, and perfection of the work of Christ. It proved that Jesus was the Messiah, that his work was completed, and that his atonement was sufficient. The gift of the Spirit to us, as a witness, indwelling comforter, and abiding intercessor, is a seal which confirms our adoption, our acceptance with God, and our right to all the privileges of the gospel. The Spirit is the Father's seal, which he gives to assure us of his favour, approbation, and love to us. It is also the Son's seal, assuring us that his blood has availed for our pardon, his righteousness for our justification, and his intercession for our final salvation. But the Spirit himself doth seal us. His seal is the truth—the word of the truth of the gospel. He makes the impression upon our hearts, which he softens with his love, and

then brings down the seal upon them with his own invincible power, and the impression is made. The truth reveals Jesus to us; and when applied to us, it leaves the likeness of Jesus stamped upon our hearts; and when the likeness of Jesus is stamped upon our hearts, it is discovered by deep hatred to sin, powerful longings for holiness, and an all-controlling desire to honour Christ, to be like Christ, and at length to be for ever with Christ. The sealing of the Spirit produces a sense of our acceptance in Christ, our union to Christ, and the lively hope of being perfectly like Christ. Spirit of Jesus, seal my heart, and be thyself the seal within me that grace and glory are mine! O my soul, I charge thee that thou grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby thou art sealed unto the day of redemption; but sow to the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and live in the Spirit!

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."—1 JOHN iv. 13.

THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT.

"God hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."—2 Cor. i. 22.

GOD hath promised us, as believers in Jesus, a great and glorious inheritance: but we have to wait for it; and while waiting, we are liable to be exercised with many temptations, doubts, and fears. Therefore, as he gives us his Spirit as a seal, to assure us of his approbation, so also he gives us the Spirit as an earnest of our inheritance. The Holy Spirit within us is God's pledge which ratifies his promise, and assures us of a full possession. It is a part of the inheritance itself. If we have the Spirit, we must have the kingdom. He has come to prepare us for it, assure us of it, and give us some sweet foretastes of its pleasures and joys. The peace that the Holy Spirit produces within us, the joy he imparts to us, and the liberty he confers upon us, are the same in kind as the peace, joy, and liberty which form so prominent a part of the

inheritance of the saints in light. They only differ in degree. The Spirit doth not now waft us up to heaven, but he often brings down some sweet foretastes of heaven into our hearts. He is God's earnest; and so sure as God has given the earnest, he will give possession of the kingdom. Therefore said Jesus, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And Paul has added, speaking of the Comforter, "He is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." O for more of those sweet foretastes, divine prelibations, and pure joys, which the blessed Spirit at times confers upon us! O for those ravishing views of Jesus, those sweet pleasures, and holy foretastes of heaven, which raise us above the present world!

"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."—2 COR. v. 5.

THE INTERCESSION OF THE SPIRIT.

"He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."—ROM. viii. 27.

THE believer does not, cannot, utter all that he feels within. He has such sorrow for sin, such desires for holiness, such longings for Christ, and such pantings for glory, that he cannot express them. These are produced by the Spirit, and prove his presence and his power. They are his intercessions within us, and are an echo of the intercession of Christ for us. Jesus intercedes for us in heaven that we may be kept, sanctified, and at length glorified; and the Spirit sets our hearts upon the same things, and draws out our whole souls in desires and prayers for them. And then God knows what our secret, unuttered prayers mean, for he searcheth our hearts. Our sighs, groans, perplexities, distresses, and strong desires, are full of meaning; and the Searcher of Hearts takes the meaning

of them, and accepts them as prayers. God knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit—what he willeth, what he dictates to our hearts, what he inspires us to aim at and seek. The Spirit's intercession is according to the will of God; he never helps us when we seek what is wrong in itself, or what would be injurious to us. He knows what God wills, what we need, and what we ought to set our hearts upon and seek; and when we do so, we follow his dictation, we yield to his influence, and we secure his assistance. O Holy Spirit, intercede in my heart! Be my advocate within, as Jesus is my advocate above. Help, O help my infirmities, and teach me for what, and how to pray as I ought! Daily show me my wants, my Saviour's fulness, my Father's loving heart, and my free welcome to all the blessings of grace and glory; and then stir me up to seek them.

"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear."—Ps. x. 17.

THE SPIRIT HELPING US.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—ROM. viii. 26.

WE are compassed with infirmities. Our weakness and ignorance are great. Sometimes we feel that we have no power to pray, and sometimes we know not what to say when we attempt to pray. We are dependent on the Holy Spirit both for power and wisdom. He teaches us our need of divine things; he unfolds to us the fulness of Jesus; he puts the promise into the hand of faith as our warrant to expect; he excites stronger desires; he produces most powerful emotions,—we sigh deeply and groan inwardly: at times, he furnishes us with suitable words, and we wonder at our own fluency; always, when he thus helps us, we feel deeply our need of the blessing, and cannot give over seeking until we obtain it. All real

prayer is produced in the soul by the blessed Spirit. All our help in prayer we receive from him. And our success in prayer depends on his presence and assistance; for we never pray in faith but when, as a Spirit of faith, he secretly assists us. Sometimes he opens to us the loving heart of God; sometimes he unfolds some precious, precious promise; sometimes he directs the eye to the ever-prevailing intercession of Jesus, and then prompts us to go alone, fall on our knees before God, and sweetly assists us in pouring out our hearts before him. O how blessed the privilege of prayer when the Spirit helps our infirmities! but how dull and dry we are when his sacred influence is withheld! Lord Jesus, daily send the Comforter into my soul, that he may help me to do thy will, bow to thy sovereignty, seek the advancement of thy cause, and the glory of thy thrice blessed name. Help, Lord, help daily!

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."—2 COR. xii. 9.

THE SPIRIT QUICKENING.

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."
JOHN vi. 63.

THAT man is dead in trespasses and sins, the Scriptures constantly affirm; that, being dead, he has no moral power; and having no moral power, without the Holy Spirit he can do nothing morally or spiritually good. It is therefore the office and work of the Holy Spirit to quicken and raise the dead in sin. All real religion begins with the quickening of the Spirit. When we experience this, we begin to *breathe* after spiritual things; we *open our eyes* in a new world; we *hunger and thirst* after righteousness; and at length *taste* that the Lord is gracious. We have new thoughts, new desires, new hopes, new fears, new joys, and new sorrows. The eye fixes on Christ, the heart goes out to Christ, and the chief desire of the soul is to be like Christ. The Spirit not only quickens us at first, so that we pass from death

unto life, but all through life we need and are dependent on the Spirit's quickening. He quickens us to pray, and he quickens us in prayer. His quickening it is that puts life into our graces, energy into our prayers, confidence into our expectations, and enables us to resist Satan, steadfast in the faith. If his quickening power is withheld, we soon grow dull, cold, lifeless, and inactive. We have no power in prayer, no enjoyment in ordinances, no liberty in speaking to the saints, nor profit in reading God's Word. Every duty becomes a task, every privilege a burden, and every cross appears insupportable. While under the quickening operation of the Spirit, we can do all things; but without his quickening we can do nothing. Often, very often, have we to cry out from bitter experience, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me according unto thy word." Quickening Spirit, daily quicken my soul!

"The letter killeth, but the Spirit" quickeneth, or "giveth life."—2 Cor. iii. 6.

THE SPIRIT TRANSFORMING US.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2 Cor. iii. 18.

THE gospel is the mirror that reflects the likeness of Christ, and Jesus is the mirror that reflects the likeness and glory of the Father. He stands before us—not as Moses did before the Jews, with a veil on his face, but unveiled; and in his unveiled face we behold the glory of God. The Holy Spirit enlightens the mind, directs the eye to Jesus, points out the excellences of Jesus, and keeps the eye fixed on Jesus; and as the face of Moses caught and reflected some rays of the glory of God on the Mount, so we are changed into the likeness of God in Christ. We are changed into the image of his holiness, love, truthfulness, mercy, justice, and compassion. We become spiritual and God-like, and all who observe us perceive that there is a great and growing change in us.

Our humility deepens, our patience strengthens, and our benevolence becomes more pure and expansive. Every man is more or less assimilated to the likeness of his god; and the Christian, the more he has to do with God, the more communion he holds with God, the more the eye of his mind is fixed on God, the more he resembles God. Man by nature is altogether unlike God; man by grace is being gradually conformed to the image of God; but man in glory will exactly resemble God. We shall then be like him, for we shall see him as he is. The sight of Christ makes us like him. O Holy Spirit, fix my eye on God in Jesus; daily may I behold his glory; and may all who know me bear witness for me, that I am changed into the image of God! O change me from glory to glory, until I am all glorious within and without, for Jesus' sake!

"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."—1 COR. xv. 49.

ACCESS TO GOD BY THE SPIRIT.

"Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."—EPH. ii. 18.

JESUS opened a way for sinners to the Father by his death; he pointed out that way by his teaching; and he emboldens us to approach in that way by his intercession. This way is intended for both Jews and Gentiles. By this way we can have access to God, come into his presence, and draw near to him. But it is the Spirit that now unfolds the way to us, excites the desire to approach God through it, and enables us to come to God by it. He gently leads us. He kindly teaches us. He secretly enables us. Without the Spirit, we should stop short of God, rest in forms, and be strangers to heart-affecting fellowship with the Most High. But the Comforter will not allow the Lord's people to be satisfied without nearness to God, intercourse with God, and frequent communications from God. Real religion is having to do

with God, having to do with God through Jesus, and under the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit. We come to God as a Father, we plead with God as a Father, we confide in God as a Father, we confess our sins to God as a Father, we obtain pardon from God as a Father, and we receive gifts and grace from God as a Father. The Holy Spirit reveals the relationship, testifies to our adoption, and gives us boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Jesus. Blessed Comforter! let us enjoy access to God, fellowship with God, and joy in God, through thy gracious influence, teaching, and work. Never, never let us rest in forms, services, or even our highest privileges; but let us be able daily to say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Nearer to God, nearer to God, we cry!

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—JUDE 20, 21.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."
GAL. v. 25.

THE Spirit of God lives in us, as the source of our sanctification; and we are to live in the Spirit, as if he were the atmosphere we breathed, the temple in which we worshipped, or the habitation in which we dwelt. To live in the Spirit, is to live under his influence, according to his word, recognizing his presence with us always. So, to walk in the Spirit, is to walk as influenced, directed, and assisted by him; looking to him for wisdom to guide us, grace to help us, and power to preserve us. To walk in the Spirit, is to live as a man delivered from the law, rescued from the present evil world, freed from the dominion of sin, and set apart for God's glory and praise. The Spirit is our teacher, leader, and comforter. We yield ourselves to him, and seek to please and honour him. We are careful not to grieve him, or resist him, or

quench his holy influences. To walk in the Spirit, is to breathe the spirit of Christ, and exhibit the temper and disposition of Christ in the midst of opposition, persecution, irritation, and many self-mortifying duties. It is to walk as Jesus walked, taking him for our pattern, and seeking grace from the Comforter, to think, feel, and act, as Jesus thought, felt, and acted. Blessed Comforter! teach us to live in the Spirit in the present day, and to walk in the Spirit as we walk through the wilderness of this world. Oh! to walk as Jesus walked, to live as Jesus lived, constantly presenting ourselves to God, for his service and praise! May we render our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service; and not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. O to be unearthly! O to be deeply spiritual!

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."—GAL. v. 16.

THE SPIRIT TESTIFYING OF CHRIST.

"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."—JOHN xv. 26.

A PRINCIPAL part of the Spirit's work is to testify of Christ. He has done this in the Word, every part of which has direct or indirect reference to Christ. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit, or soul, of prophecy; prophecies without Christ, are like a body without a soul. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. The types and shadows of the law, the predictions of the prophetic page, the psalms and songs of the Bible, are all impregnated with Christ. But in the New Testament especially the Spirit has testified of Christ; there he bears witness to his birth, baptism, miracles, claims, sufferings, death, resurrection, and triumphant ascension to glory. He testifies still in the Word and ordinances, by the voice of the preacher, and by his power in the conscience.

He bears witness for Christ, and testifies of Christ, in the believer's heart. He testifies to his divinity, and to the glory of his person as God and man, the one all-glorious Mediator. He testifies of the merit of his blood, the perfection of his righteousness, the love of his heart, and his readiness to save sinners, even the very chief. He testifies of the exact suitability of Christ to meet every case, suit every tried saint and troubled sinner, and to be the eternal Saviour of all them that obey him. Let us then recognize, realize, and reverence the Holy Spirit, as the almighty testifier to the glory, worth, and excellency of the Lord Jesus. Spirit of God, testify in our hearts, and to our consciences, of the glorious person and perfect work of Jesus! O for the testimony within, corresponding to, and confirming the testimony of the written Word!

"By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us."—HEB. x. 14, 15.

THE SPIRIT GLORIFYING CHRIST.

"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come,..he shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."—JOHN xvi. 13, 14.

IF Christ is exalted, the sinner must be abased. If Jesus is set on high, the creature must be laid in the dust. We therefore find that in proportion as a man is taught by the Spirit, and filled with the Spirit, he has very low and humbling views of himself; and the more abasing views he has of himself, the more honourable and exalted views he has of Christ. The Spirit always glorifies Christ, in his person, work, word, offices, relations, and love. When we have much of the Spirit, we think much of Christ, we commune much with Christ, we speak much of Christ, and we sing the praises of Christ. We feel that we cannot honour Christ enough. When the Spirit shows us his infinite and unchanging love, his spotless and glorious righteousness, his perfect and all-suffi-

cient atonement, his deep and tender sympathy, his constant and prevalent intercession; or leads our minds forward to his final manifestation, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe; then our hearts overflow with love to him, we exercise strong confidence in him, we praise and bless him, we consecrate ourselves and all we have to him, and we long to be with him and see him as he is. His glory eclipses all other, he is to us the altogether lovely, and we take him for our all in all. No words can represent our view of his worth, nor do we conceive it possible to speak in exaggerated terms of his dignity, glory, and beauty. We long for a seraph's fire, for an angel's harp, that we may exalt him, extol him, and set him on high; and eternity appears most glorious, because it is to be spent in praising, blessing, and glorifying his name.

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."—1 PETER ii. 7.

THE SPIRIT OF GRACE.

"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications."—ZECH. xii. 10.

THE Holy Spirit is gracious in his nature; and his office in the economy of redemption is to convey grace from the Father, through the Son, into the sinner's heart. Our heavenly Father is the God of all grace. This grace flows into Jesus, and he is full of grace and truth; and this grace is by the Holy Spirit directed into our hearts, so that out of his fulness we receive, and grace for grace. The grace we receive from Jesus conforms us to Jesus; for grace is that which purifies and elevates our nature, and sanctifies us to the Lord's glory and praise. Grace is the spring of all real prayer, the source of all good works, and the root of all spiritual excellency. If we would serve God acceptably, we must receive grace to do so; if we would have our conversation as

becometh the gospel of Christ, it must be by grace received from God; and if we would patiently endure afflictions and cheerfully carry our cross, we must come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need. All our graces are wrought in us by the Spirit; all our graces are preserved and kept alive by the Spirit; all our graces are excited and drawn forth by the Spirit. Nor is the plant in nature more dependent on the moisture of the soil, the rays of the sun, the dews of heaven, and the air which surrounds it, than our graces are dependent on the Spirit of grace. We can do anything through grace; but we can do nothing correctly, or as it ought to be done, without grace. O Spirit of grace, fill us with grace from Jesus, and teach us to make use of all our grace for Jesus; and at length may grace ripen into glory to the honour of Jesus.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit."—Ps. li. 12.

THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.

"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."—ROM. viii. 15.

THE spirit of bondage is the spirit generated by the law, which leads us to dread God's majesty, fear his wrath, and tremble in his presence. The Jews before their conversion had this. But the Spirit of adoption is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, which is given to us through the gospel. We receive not this Spirit by the works of the law, but through the hearing of faith. We are made the sons of God by adoption—an act without us; we receive the nature of the sons of God by regeneration—a work within us; then we receive the Spirit of adoption—a favour conferred upon us. The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption, reveals God's paternal character, sheds abroad his love in our hearts, gives us soul-captivating views of him in the person of Jesus, and then

secretly and sweetly whispers, "Abba, Abba;" and almost before we are aware of it, we look up and call God Father. This is accompanied with a sweet sense of interest in him, and a soul-transforming enjoyment of his presence; as the effect of which, all dread, fear, and bondage depart, and we have boldness and access with confidence into God's presence by the faith of Jesus. Now we know Paul's meaning when he said, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; *by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand*, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Spirit of adoption, take up thy permanent residence in my heart; lead me from all legal and soul-straitening views; and give me to enjoy my new covenant relationship, to the praise and glory of free grace.

"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."—GAL. iv. 6.

THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—2 Cor. iii. 17.

WHEN the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of Christ, takes possession of the soul, he finds it in bondage under the law, the slave of sin and the captive of Satan. There is no real liberty, nor even the desire for any: the sinner loves his bondage, until quickened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. But the Spirit having imparted life, throws open the prison windows of the soul, and the man discovers his dreadful state of vassalage and woe. Now he sighs for freedom, and longs to walk at liberty in a perfect way. He prays for deliverance from his thraldom; and the blessed Comforter breaks off his fetters, casts away his chains, and brings him from under the yoke. He is delivered from the power and tyranny of sin, his conscience is cleansed from guilt, and his heart is freed from slavish fears. He is brought from under the

law, which requires of him, threatens, and galls him; and comes under the gospel, which speaks peace, presents him with every needed blessing, and tells him of God's most free and everlasting love. Sin cannot now have dominion over him, as he is not under the law, but under grace. Satan is cast out; and though he may harass, solicit, and endeavour to lead astray, he has lost his power and authority, and can no longer lead us captive at his will. We have liberty to approach God with confidence, to confide in Jesus with comfort, and to serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. We are free indeed, and free for ever. The jubilee of the soul is come, and the year of release has arrived. We are no more slaves, but sons; and being sons, we are heirs of God through Christ. The Son having made us free, we are free indeed.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—ROM. viii. 2.

THE SPIRIT THE REMEMBRANCER.

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—JOHN xiv. 26.

THE memory of the believer is depraved and treacherous: he can remember the evil, but he forgets the good. Often when he is in darkness or trouble, or bowed down under the inward cross, the promises intended to cheer, animate, and comfort him, are forgotten by him. But it is a part of the work of the ever blessed Spirit to bring home God's Word to the mind. This he does sometimes by fixing the eye on the promise in the Book; sometimes by using a fellow-Christian to point it out; and sometimes by directly suggesting it to the mind. How many precious truths, sweet promises, and pleasant remembrances of the Lord's work in us and for us in times past, come to the mind, so opportunely that we cannot account for it, when we forget this part of the Spirit's

work. He directs the preacher to address us as if he knew the most secret thoughts of our hearts; or some Christian speaks to us as if he had been listening at our closet door; or some sweet portion of the Word, perhaps never noticed before, flows into the soul, filling us with joy and peace. This is the Spirit's work as a remembrancer. At times, when we are in prayer, portions of Scripture present themselves—just what we wanted to plead; or sweet views of Jesus are given us—just what we wanted to encourage us; or portions we had heard, read, or enjoyed years before, come back upon us with force and energy, clothed with new power and impregnated with new sweetness: all this is to be ascribed to the presence, love, and operation of the Holy Comforter. Blessed Spirit, remind me of Jesus daily, and bring home his sweet words with power to my soul.

"When Jesus was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them."—JOHN ii. 22.

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.

"Be filled with the Spirit."—EPH. v. 18.

THAT which is our greatest privilege is here spoken of as if it were our duty. Indeed, privileges always imply duties, and duties suppose privileges. Every believer has the Spirit, but we have not that measure, that fulness of the Spirit we might have. There is a fulness, and we may receive more; there is abundance, and we are invited to come and obtain freely. The parties to whom Paul wrote had the Spirit, and were sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption; and yet to them he says, "*Be filled with the Spirit.*" An increase is possible—desirable—certain. It would be a preservative from a multitude of evils; keeping the soul holy, the body chaste, the person fit for Christ's service, and prepared for heaven. It would qualify us for all other duties, influencing the views, thoughts, motives, words, and actions. It

would rule our wills, control our passions, direct our energies, employ our talents, honour our profession, and increase our happiness. It is therefore a duty, to which we ought immediately to attend. We have the promise, the invitation, the examples, the inducements, and the exhortation, placed before us in God's Word. Shall we despise or neglect all these? Let us ask our consciences, Was I ever filled with the Spirit? Do I feel that I ought to be? Do I heartily desire the blessing? Do I daily and energetically seek it? Can I be happy without it? All we want to make us holy, active, useful, liberal, and happy, is to be filled with the Spirit; but nothing but being filled with the Spirit will make us so. O Spirit of God, come and fill my soul! Let me be filled with thy light, thy life, thy love, thy power, thy holiness, thyself! O to be full of God!

"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."—ACTS xi. 24.

HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST?

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost?"—ACTS xix. 2.

THERE can be no spiritual religion without the Holy Ghost, for he is its author, source, and spring; and the religion that is not spiritual, is not the religion of Christ. If you have received the Holy Ghost, you must know it. You may not know the time when you received the Spirit, nor be able to describe the manner or immediate effects of his entrance into your heart; but if you have received the Spirit, you may know it by the following marks: You know that you had not the Spirit once, but were sensual, having not the Spirit. You have high and honourable thoughts of Christ, and low and humbling views of yourself. You reverence God's law as holy, just, and good; and you prize Christ's gospel as glorious good news, and the glad tidings of a full, free, and finished salvation. You dread deception, and would

rather suffer anything now than find yourself deceived at last; and you seek by all means in your power to know the certainty of your interest in Christ. You hate sin—sin within you, sin without you, sin everywhere, but especially in yourself; and you long, pray, pant, and strive for holiness, holiness of heart and life. You wish to be useful to your fellow-men, and to honour Jesus in your day and generation, in your body, soul, and spirit, which are his. You are ruled by God's Word, and habitually deny self that you may honour Christ and glorify God. Where these marks are, there is the Holy Spirit; but if we have none of these, there is every reason to question whether we have received the Holy Ghost. Examine me, O Lord; search my heart, and discover to me my real state. Never let me be satisfied with a religion without the Holy Spirit, or, having the Spirit, dishonour him by denying it!

"Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—ROM. viii. 9.

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN AFTER FAITH.

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"
ACTS xix. 2.

GOD gives the Spirit at first, to convince us of our need of Christ, lead us to Christ, and enable us to find salvation in Christ. Afterwards, the Holy Spirit is given more fully, to reveal Christ, to lead us into closer fellowship with Christ, and to make us happy in Christ. He takes up his dwelling in us as the joy-inspiring, peace-imparting, confidence-producing Spirit. He brings us from under the law, and places us under the gospel. He shows us that there is a fulness of joy in Jesus, and that it is there for us; that it is our privilege to be happy—happy under all circumstances, as it is written, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice." He sets up God's kingdom in our hearts, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Those who receive this blessing are

said to be "full of joy and of the Holy Ghost." The "fruit of the Spirit is joy." And of believers, though persecuted, tried, and tempted, it is written, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Heavenly Father, give us the Comforter in fulness and power! Blessed Spirit, take full possession of us, dwell in us, act in us, and raise us above our sins, doubts, fears, and sorrows, and fill us with joy and peace in believing. Holy Jesus, give the Spirit anew to all thy believing people, that they may be strong in faith, active in duty, patient in tribulation, peaceful in trouble, courageous in the prospect of death, and may anticipate thy glorious advent with unspeakable delight!

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."—ROM. xv. 13.

HAVING NOT THE SPIRIT.

"These be..sensual, having not the Spirit."—JUDE 19.

A MAN may have many things, and yet the one thing be lacking. He may have an office in the church, a reputation among Christians, a false hope, unfounded confidence, clear knowledge, useful gifts, and correct morals, and yet not have the Spirit. Without the Spirit there is no true faith, spiritual repentance, genuine love, enlightened zeal, deep convictions of sin, right, heart-affecting views of Christ, or self-renunciation. The consequences of such a state are, now—we can have no title to church privileges, no fitness for the Lord's service, no enjoyment of fellowship with God, no consecration to the Lord's glory. Hereafter they will be still more fearful; for we shall be disowned of Jesus, shut out from the marriage supper of the Lamb, exposed to the fiery wrath of God, and be punished with everlasting destruction

from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. It is of little consequence what a man has if he has not the Spirit. No substitute can be found for this, therefore we should carefully examine, and make sure work on this point. Lest we should be deceived, let us not be satisfied with anything less than the fulness of the Spirit. Dear reader, have *you* received the Holy Ghost? Do you *live* in the Spirit? Do you *walk* in the Spirit? Take heed lest you *resist* the Holy Ghost—lest you *grieve* the Spirit—lest you *quench* the Spirit; for God may say, "My Spirit shall no more strive with him—let him alone;" and then all is lost—you are undone—undone for ever. Many have resisted the Holy Spirit until God has given them up; and then Satan has taken full possession, and the case has become desperate. Flee, O flee to Jesus, and it can never be your case!

"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—LUKE xi. 13.